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UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode No. 32.

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12:30 to 1:30 P.M. C.D.S.T. SEPTEMBER 1, 1932. THURSDAY

ANNOUNCER: And now - "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" --

(ORCHESTRA: QUARTET)

ANNOUNCER:

Now to the National Forest, where Ranger Jim Robbins and his young assistant, Jerry Quick, are on the job. Last week, fires were raging on the Pine Cone District, and Ranger Jim and Jerry and their men were in the midst of a gruelling battle with the flames. It was a hard fight, but they finally got the fire under control, and today we find Jerry and Jim back at the scene of the fire, mapping the burned over area, and estimating the damage to the National Forest.

JIM: Hmm. Look at that, Jerry. She sure burned hot in here.

JERRY: You bet she did! There isn't a speck of green growth left anywhere around here. -- Nothing but black tree stumps.

JIM: Yep. It isn't a very pretty picture, is it?

JERRY: I should say not.

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JIM: In a few years this area most likely'll grow up to worthless brush -- and the only way we can get good timber to growing here again will be by planting.

JERRY: Another planting job to put on the program, eh?

JIM: Yeah. -- Over there on that slope across the creek -- I reckon that'll seed in again naturally in time. There's a few live trees left. -- But it'll take years and years for it to come back though, Jerry.

JERRY: Yeah. I guess it will. Do you suppose we'll be able to salvage any of this burned timber?

JIM: I don't know. I doubt it. The timber market is awful poor now.

JERRY: It seems a rotten shame for it all to go to waste. I suppose in a couple of years it won't be good for anything.

JIM: No -- it soon gets punky and worthless, and just adds to the fuel for the next fire.

JERRY: Hey, look, Jim! Look there!

JIM: Hmm -- Sure enough. It's a deer, Jerry. A doe -- and burned to a crisp.

JERRY: Gosh! Ain't that a shame! -- I bet she was making for the creek when the fire caught her.

JIM: Most likely. -- I wouldn't be surprised if she had a fawn she was trying to lead away from the fire. Probably the fawn isn't far from here -- burned to death, too.

JERRY: Yes, I'll bet it's around here somewhere. -- Poor animals. I can imagine them trying to get away from the fire - not knowing what it was all about - and scared to death. -- Look, isn't that a fawn over there?

JIM: Yes - it's burned almost beyond recognition. -- I wish all the hunters in the country could see this, Jerry. Hunters cause fires sometimes - mostly by being just plain thoughtless about their smoking and campfires - and this'd make 'em stop and think what forest fire does to the game.

JERRY: Yeah, it sure would. -- There's a lot of things you can see here to make you stop and think. Look at where all our young growth here has been killed out clean. This fire sure gave us a setback in our program for developing this area.

JIM: It's set us back a hundred years or more in some places, Jerry - and all on account of one little cigarette, throwm into the brush.

JERRY: Gosh! You'd think anybody with any brains at all would know better than to do a thing like that - wouldn't you?

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JIM: You'd think so. It's strange how thoughtless some people can be, though. I guess there isn't a person in his right mind, in the whole country that'd want to cause damage like this, and yet people cause thousands of forest fires every year from pure carelessness or thoughtlessness. -- You know, Jerry, they say the early Buddhists had a special Hell reserved for those who set fire to the forests.

JERRY: Is that right? What was it like?

JIM: Well, the special punishment they had for 'em was to be impaled on the ends of stakes and then burnt - something like you broil a lamb chop over the fire on the end of a stick, I s'pose.

JERRY: (CHUCKLES) After the tough time I had on this fire I think I'd almost be willing to vote the same penalty for some of our woods burners.

JIM: Well, maybe the Buddhists had the right idea - but personally I still think it'd be better if we could get people to use their heads when they're in the woods, while they're still living, instead of broiling 'em over the coals after they're dead. -- Well, here we are back to our horses again, Jerry. I reckon we'd better be heading back to the Station.

JERRY: Okay. (CALLS) Hi, Spark. -- Look at him perk up his ears.

JIM: Spark's anxious to get away from this place --
(PATTING HORSE) You too, ain't you, Dolly, old
girl? -- The fine ashes we stir up around here
hurts their eyes.

JERRY: Gee, I don't blame 'em. It makes my eyes sore, too,
-- and my throat's burning like the dickens right now.

JIM: The cool green, unburned woods'll look pretty good
for a change, won't it, Jerry?

JERRY: Yeah, I'll say.

JIM: I want to stop by the place where the fire started
along the road, again, Jerry. It was too hot in
there last time to do much looking around. -- Maybe
we can find something more to put us on the trail
of the person that started the fire.

JERRY: Yeah. You did find a piece of a garage receipt when
you were there before, though, didn't you?

JIM: Yes, but it was pretty badly charred. -- All set,
Jerry?

JERRY: Yeah. Soon as I get this compass and note-book
in the saddle bag here. -- All right. Let's go.
(MOUNTING) Whoa, now.

JIM: (MOUNTING) Whoa there, Dolly. -- All right, old girl.
(CLUCKS TO HORSE)(FADEOUT WITH SOUND OF HORSES WALKING)
(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

JIM: Get the camera out of the saddlebag, Jerry, in case
we need it.

JERRY: (OFF) Okay.

JIM: Here's where the fire started -- right in the brush along the road.

JERRY: Yes. -- Look Jim, you can still see auto tracks here.

JIM: Yes. You can see where a car pulled up at the side of the road here all right. Looks like a man got out and walked around. -- But there's no way of telling if it was the same day the fire started.

JERRY: No. It looks like the tire-tread had a criss-cross pattern. -- Want me to try a picture?

JIM: I'm afraid the tracks are too dim to show in a picture, Jerry.

JERRY: Yeah. They're too jumbled up to show much anyhow.

JIM: Look, somebody dropped the empty cover of a jacket of paper matches here. It's from Tom's Lunch Room in Winding Creek.

JERRY: Sure enough.

JIM: It's been wet on the back here -- and stained brown by something or other, -- see?

JERRY: Yeah. That's what it looks like.

JIM: Guess I'd better take it along. It might mean something -- you never can tell. -- Well, let's go on back to the Station. There's not much to help us here.

JERRY: Okay. -- Gee, I'm sure glad we don't have to go far to get back to green woods again.

(FADEOUT)

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(SOUND OF DOOR)

JIM: Well, Jerry -- home again.

JERRY: Yep. -- Whew. I'm tired. I haven't got caught up with my sleep yet. -- after fighting fire all last week.

JIM: It wears you down all right. -- (CALLS) Oh, Bess.

BESS: (OFF) Is that you, Jim? (COMING UP) Well, you and Jerry finally did decide to come back?

JIM: Yep. Two of the boys in forest green - come back with aching feet. -- The old one says "What's the news today?" -- The young one says "When do we eat?"

JERRY: (LAUGHS) Hey - when did you get to be a poet?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) I guess an old man like me ought to be allowed a few liberties.

BESS: Jim must be feeling better. -- Well now, as to the question "when do we eat," the answer is not till I get good and ready to serve supper.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Hear that, Jerry? Now I guess you'll be good.

BESS: I guess Jerry isn't the only one that's concerned about supper.

JIM: No? -- Well maybe not.

JERRY: Any time that suits Mrs. Robbins suits me.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Well, I see I'm not getting very far with the grub question. -- Anything happen today, Bess?

BESS: Well, the manager of the Winding Creek summer hotel called up and wanted to know if you could train his staff of employees as a special volunteer fire-fighting crew. He said he'd pay for whatever equipment they needed, - and everything.

JIM: Well now, that sounds interesting, Bess. I guess I'll have to have a talk with him.

BESS: He said that naturally he wanted to help us any way he could to keep fires out of our forest, but besides that it's good business for him. He says he's been running at full capacity all summer, but since the big fires started two weeks ago, he hasn't had a single new guest come to his hotel.

JIM: I reckon a lot of other business men here in Winding Creek have been finding out that forest fires hurt business.

BESS: Yes, I guess they have.

JIM: Well, I'll have a talk with the hotel manager this evening. -- Hmm, now -- what did we have in the mail today, Bess?

BESS: There wasn't much, Jim, except a letter from the Supervisor's office.

JIM: I guess I'd better take a look at it -- where is it?

BESS: Right there on the table.

JIM: Oh yes -- Well, let's see -- Hmm. -- This might help some --

JERRY: What is it?

JIM: You remember that piece of crumpled paper I picked up on the road the other day up where the Windy Mountain fire started?

JERRY: Yes - what was left of a garage repair bill, wasn't it?

JIM: Yes. From the Willow Glen Garage. You could make out the last three numbers where the garage man wrote down the tag number of the car, but it was too charred to make out the rest. The numbers you could still read were "3-4-1."

JERRY: Yeah?

JIM: Well, I asked the Supervisor's office in Willow Glen to check up on the repair jobs at the garage, and they found that they'd only had one car lately with tags having those last three numbers - and they've given me the full tag number and the make of the car and the owner's name here.

JERRY: Well, that's something, anyhow.

JIM: While we're at it, I think I'll go down to Tom's Lunch Room right now and ask Tom a few questions about his packets of paper matches. There's time before supper, isn't there, Bess?

BESS: Yes, if you don't stay too long.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Of course I won't -- You'd better come along, Jerry.

JERRY: Sure.

JIM: (GOING OFF) All right. We won't be gone long,
Bess.

 (MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

JIM: Well, Jerry, here's Tom's lunch room. Let's go
in and see how good old Tom's memory is.

JERRY: Okay.

 (SOUND OF DOOR)

JIM: Hello there, Tom -

TOM: (OFF) Hi there, Jim. 'Lo, Mr. Quick.

JERRY: Howdy, Tom.

JIM: How's the lunch room business these days, Tom?

TOM: (UP) Pretty slow, Jim. I ain't had more'n a
handful of tourists come in the whole time since the
fire broke out. Forest fires sure knock the
dickens outa business.

JIM: I know they do, Tom.

TOM: Set down to the counter there, Jim - you and Mr.
Quick - or wan't you figgerin' on eatin'?

JIM: Not this time, Tom. Bess is fixin' supper for us
up at the station now.

TOM: Jest dropped in to pass the time o'day, huh? Well,
I'm always glad to see yuh, Jim, anyhow -- You and
yer pardner.

JIM: Thanks. -- You sec, Tom, we were just wondering if
you remembered anything about what went on week ago
last Monday. That was the day the Bald Mountain
fire started.

TOM: The day the big fire started? Sure, I remember that day well enough. I fed a whole crew of your fire fighters that night, before they left for the fire. Took all the grub I had in the place.

JIM: Yeah, I know. Do you remember any of the people that came in earlier in the day?

TOM: Hmm -- let's see now. That was kind of a slow day, I remember. -- Let's see -- There was some of the boys from the lumber mill come in for breakfast -- and Jim Forbes come in for lunch -- I think that was the day he was here. He was on his way over to Blue Lake.

JIM: He was, eh? -- Did Forbes buy any cigarettes? Or ask for any matches?

TOM: I don't remember him gettin' any.

JIM: Uh-huh. -- Well, anyone else, Tom? -- Any Strangers?

TOM: Well, that was the day a family of tourists come in for lunch, with about six kids. They et over there at the table, stead of settin' up to the lunch counter here -- and I know that was the same day all right, cause I had to change the table cloth twice that day -- once after all them kids and their folks left, and then I had to change 'er again after the fire-fightin' crew was through in the evenin'.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Sort of a hard day on table clothes, eh, Tom? -- Remember any other customers that day?

TOM: Well, there was one other stranger I remember, -- a fellow that come in by himself kinda early. I remember askin' him whether he was aimin' on havin' a late breakfast or an early lunch.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Which was it?

TOM: Breakfast, I reckon. He ordered ham'n eggs. -- He set right there on the same stool Mr. Quick's settin' on -- and see that cigarette burn on my counter there?

JERRY: Here? Yeah, it sure made a bad mark, didn't it?

TOM: He done that. Left his cigarette layin' on the edge of the counter there while he was eatin' -- as if I didn't have ash trays stuck all over the place.

JIM: One of those fellows that hasn't learned how to take care of a cigarette yet, eh? -- Did he buy any cigarettes from you, Tom, when he went out?

TOM: Let's see -- Yeah. He bought a pack, I think.

JIM: Did you give him any matches?

TOM: Yeah -- I remember now. He asked me for some matches and I give him a paper of them safety matches -- I tossed 'em over on the counter and they landed where some coffee was spilled. He took 'em anyhow and wiped 'em off with a paper napkin.

JIM: This begins to sound interesting, Tom. -- See this paper match cover here? See where it's been wet on the back? Do you suppose that's coffee stains there, Tom?

TOM: Say -- I bet that's the same pack o' matches all right!

JIM: Might be. -- What did this fellow look like, Tom?

TOM: Well, he was kinda tall - and he had a scar acrost his upper lip - right here, sec? -- I don't jost remember what kinda clothes he had on. --

JIM: Could you identify him again, Tom?

TOM: Sure I could. I can remember that scar perfect. -- I says to myself when I seen him that day -- jokin' to myself, like -- I bet he got that scar on his lip from eatin' with his knife, I says. -- Say, where'd yuh get that pack o' matches?

JIM: I found this paper match cover up where the fire started.

TOM: By gravy, I bet that fellow done it!

JIM: Can't say, Tom. This doesn't prove much. -- He might've just happened to throw it out along the road there.

(SOUND OF DOOR, OFF)

TOM: Here comes a customer I gotta wait on, Jim. -- Scuse me, will yuh?

JIM: Sure. Jerry and I better be movin' on now, anyhow, Tom. Thanks a lot for helping us.

TOM: That's okay, Jim. (FADING OFF) Yes sir, whatcha gonna have, Mister --

(SOUND OF DOOR)

JIM: Well, Jerry, we know a little more than we did.

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JERRY: Yeah. We know the car -- and the fellow that had the safety matches. It ought to be easy now.

JIM: Not so easy, Jerry. -- There's nothing definite yet. But the way I've got it figured out is that the person that started the fire, whoever he was, stopped his car along the road, going up the hill, to let his engine cool off.

JERRY: Yeah, it's a pretty stiff climb.

JIM: And then he got out and took off his radiator cap, using that garage receipt to keep from burning his hand, seein' as it musta been pretty hot. Then I reckon he lit a cigarette and walked up and down the road some and then sat down on his running board to finish his smoke. And when he finished he flipped the burning cigarette butt off into the brush -- and it started a fire that cost us one human life and hundreds of acres of fine timber and watershed - and cost the Government hundreds of dollars to put it out.

JERRY: I bet that's the way it happened, all right - All from one cigarette!

JIM: Well, there's no proof as to who it was yet. The man with the scarred lip might've just happened to throw that packet of matches out there as he went by.

and the other side of the river, the water is very shallow and the bottom is very soft.

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JERRY: That's right, too. What we need is a witness that saw someone smoking there.

JIM: Yep. You heard Tom say that Jim Forbes was heading up that road that day, didn't you, Jerry?

JERRY: Yeah. Who's Jim Forbes.

JIM: He lives here in the village. I think I'd better hunt 'im up and question him a little, while we're at it. (GOING OFF) Come along, Jerry. I might need you for a witness. --

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

JIM: (COMING UP) Well, Jerry, Forbes denied that he did any smoking along that road himself - knowing that that area was closed to smoking.

JERRY: Yeah, but he saw a man stopped by the road, smoking, he said.

JIM: Yes, he saw him - and he noticed the make of the car -- it tallies with the one the Supervisor's office gave us.

JERRY: I couldn't get much out of his description of the man, but Forbes says he could identify him if he saw him again.

JIM: Yes, Forbes says he slowed down to warn the man that that area was closed to smoking. I believe him, Jerry. He always has cooperated with us.

JERRY: Well, we know the car that was there, and that the driver stopped to smoke. That about cinches it, doesn't it?

JIM: I don't know, Jerry -- we'll see. -- Say -- look there, Jerry. That car in front of the store over there looks kinda interesting.

JERRY: Gosh, that's right. It's the same license number the Supervisor's office wrote you about!

JIM: Yep - and it's the same make Forbes noticed.

JERRY: (SOTTO VOICE) Look! I bet that's the owner of the car coming out of the store there. -- Look! He's got a scar on his lip! That's the man all right! Hadn't we better arrest 'im right now!?

JIM: No, Jerry. We don't want to exceed our authority.

JERRY: Aw, say -- Here he is right under our noses -- and we've got plenty of evidence!

JIM: We'll have to lay our evidence before the district attorney, Jerry, --and let him act on it.

JERRY: Yeah, I guess that's right.

JIM: But I reckon we know the man now that set fire to our forest.

(FADEOUT)

ANNOUNCER:

Vigorous enforcement of the laws for the protection of the national forests and prompt apprehension of persons who carelessly or deliberately set fire to the forests is part of the job of Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers. In the case of forest fires, however, as in many other things, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure - and forest fires can largely be prevented by observation of the few simple rules for safety and using constant care with fire in the woods.

Ranger Jim and Jerry will be with us again at this same hour next Thursday. "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" comes to you as a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company, with the cooperation of the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

The role of Jim Robbins is played by Harvey Hays. Others in today's cast were:

er/5:00 P.M.
August 29, 1932.

